

turned out of the House. A man has been elected to the present Congress who served a term in prison for murder.

Every now and then propositions are made to increase the length of a representative's term from two to four years. But in this case sight is lost of the very fundamentals of the House,—that it shall always be fresh from the people. George Washington is said to have described the functions of the House and Senate by saying that the House was the hot cup of tea and the Senate was the saucer in which it was cooled.

DURING Washington's terms as President it was his habit to go frequently to the sessions of Congress, especially the House, where, seated next the presiding officer, he would listen to the debates. It was noticed that he did this oftenest when things were not going to his pleasure, and the awful majesty of his bearing, and that extraordinary authority in his eye, would to a degree overawe the House.

There is a magnificent room at the Capitol appropriated to the use of the President. It is rarely, however, that a President visits the Capitol more than twice from the day of his inauguration until the expiration of his term. These two occasions are at the close of the two Congresses in the presidential term, when he usually goes to the Capitol so as to save time in signing bills. But not all Presidents do even this, some holding that it leads to hasty legislation. President Cleveland flatly refused to go to the Capitol, and never set foot in it except at the beginning and end of his terms of office.

The Congressional Directory is a book giving the biography, or rather, the autobiography, of every member of the Senate and House, as these personal histories are given by the Senators and Representatives themselves. It is what the late Horace Greeley would call "mighty interesting reading." It is supposed that the Senator or Representative shall furnish only the story of his public life; but sometimes they indulge in personal items. For example, some years ago, Congress was convulsed by the statement in the biography of a Massachusetts Representative, "Married the only daughter of James Russell Lowell." A Virginia Representative, determined to explain why it was he was not born upon the sacred soil, proclaimed in print, "Was born in New York, while his mother was on a visit to her family." A recent Representative thought it judicious to say in his biography, "Has been married; but is now a widower."

THE evolution of a Representative is of ten peculiar and interesting. Those who come to Congress trained in State Legislatures have the best chance of finding their feet quickly. Nevertheless, as a leading member of the present Congress expressed it, "Time is required for a man to adjust himself from the affairs of a big State to the affairs of a nation of one hundred and four millions of people."

As representation is based upon one Representative to every two hundred thousand population, it will be seen that the newest and rawest Representative stands for a really enormous constituency. He is the first man among two hundred thousand people. If he comes from a constituency in which there are no large cities, his pay of seventy-five hundred dollars a year, with mileage, clerk hire, stationery, and a few other perquisites, appears large to him. If he has any private means, and his income aggregates altogether ten thousand dollars a year, he thinks himself a rich man.

When he comes to Washington, and brings his family, there is a painful disillusionment on that point ahead of him. Washington was formerly the cheapest Capital in the world, and even now it is comparatively cheap among Capitals, and the cost of living is not nearly so high as in New York and Chicago. But a public man is at many expenses, and has to maintain two establishments, because it is a fatal mistake to give up his home establishment. Many Representatives and Senators have done this, to find themselves promptly unseated in the next election.

There are also painful social disillusionments. Society in Washington is unlike that of any city in the United States, and has a strong resemblance to that of European Capitals. Until twenty-five years ago, Washington was a political Capital, pure and simple. A Representative and his family were certain of social recognition. A Senator was a very important person; Cabinet officers and their families were at the top of the social ladder. Within the last two decades Washington has become the center of a great colony of rich people, including several South African millionaires, and a tremendous number of Western millionaires. In addition to this, it is the heaven of rich widows who find Washington a

stop-gap between European Capitals and the great commercial centers of the West.

The new Representative and his family, therefore, if their fortune is moderate, find themselves between the millionaire colony on one side, called the "smart set," and the old residential society on the other, known as the "cave dwellers," neither of which has any particular interest in the newcomer. This has thrown the political element back upon itself, and it forms an agreeable and distinctive circle. This has resulted in the formation of the Congressional Club, a woman's club, of which Miss Helen Cannon, daughter of former Speaker Cannon, was first president. In this club there are many women, wives of Representatives and Senators, who have an important social position in Washington, and through this organization the wives of newcomers are hospitably received, and find a circle of acquaintances who soon make them feel at home. There is no similar club for Senators and Representatives; but the Senate and House have many characteristics of a club, and no man need ever want for friends or company if he belongs to either House.

THERE are two classes of Representatives, however, who never evolve anything. One is the selfmade man, who has acquired a great fortune, and fought his way through life by kicking others out of his path. These men come to Congress with the combative instinct highly developed. They are met by a solid wall of custom and experience, against which they may dash their heads in vain. These men are administrators, and can never be converted into legislators. They are in general lawless, both by nature and by ignorance of law. One term generally suffices for a man of this type. He comes to Congress bent on accomplishing certain things by the only method he knows, which is that of the steam roller. He finds a steam roller three hundred and ninety times bigger than his own, which rolls over him and his ambitions and pulverizes them. He is naturally infuriated, calls Congress reactionary, declares that reforms are not encouraged, and either throws up his job or is pitched over the ropes at the next election.

The second unsuccessful type is the faddist, who comes to Congress for the purpose of transforming his fads into legislation. He is annoyed and chagrined to find that, although he may talk of his schemes, declare his plans in newspaper interviews, and obtain "leave to print" in the Congressional Record, and have it distributed broadcast, he never gets anything enacted into law.

There is one Socialist in the sixty-second Congress, and he made his debut by introducing a bill to make it easy to change the Constitution of the United States. That immediately settled him. Men who are experienced in national legislation have found out that it is more than doubtful whether the Constitution of the United States can ever be amended again, and that the last two amendments, the fourteenth and the fifteenth, are dead letters.

It is one of the stock jokes of Congress, "What is the Constitution between friends?" The origin of the expression was: A New York Representative of the steam roller variety mentioned to a colleague a piece of legislation he was determined to put through. His colleague, an experienced Representative, mildly replied, "It is in violation of the Constitution." To which the steam roller Representative indignantly replied, "What's the Constitution between friends?"

It has often been alleged that there are too many lawyers in Congress; but it has been found by actual experience that lawyers are the only men who can make laws that steer clear of the Constitution and are water tight.

It is a tradition of the House that no journalist has ever been successful as a Representative. The more brilliant the journalist, the more complete his failure.

The House of Representatives is a pure democracy. It has been said that, on the turf and under the turf, all men are equal; but the same may be said of the floor of the House. It is the man, and not his money, his birth, his social standing, that counts.

It is the glory of the American Congress that, with opportunities of making money greater than were ever in the power of any body of men on this planet, the instances in which members have sold their honor are few, and there has been from the beginning a superb show of honesty among the Representatives of the people. The names of Dingley of Maine, Randall of Pennsylvania, Wilson of West Virginia, Tucker of Virginia, and scores and hundreds of others could be mentioned that lived and died in honorable poverty, who needed only to name their price to have become millionaires in a day. That lofty type of man has always been common in the United States, and is to this day.



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